

The Twelve Apostles
Mark 3

Family Talk
THE TWELVE APOSTLES

In Mark, Chapter 3, we see that from His disciples the Lord chose twelve that He would send forth to do His good work (verse 14). The twelve selected from the many disciples would be called apostles (Luke 6:13). For a disciple is a follower, and an apostle is one who is sent forth.

Let us for a moment picture what went before for these twelve who were now selected to be the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. Two of them, John and Andrew, had first met the Lord when they were followers of John the Baptist. When they saw the Lord, they did not know anything about Him, but John the Baptist pointed to Him and said, “Behold! the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, 36). Those words must have affected them, for they began to follow the Lord. And they affect us, too. We think of the strong sphere of innocence that the Lord has and which has such a beautiful effect taking away what is wrong in the world. Indeed, each time we have a really happy time without any feelings of anger, or hatred, or ill-will to others, we should rejoice in the presence of the One who takes away the sin of the world.

We do not know what the Lord told those two young followers when they spent part of a day with Him, but it was enough that Andrew wanted to go and tell his brother Simon. And when Simon came to the Lord, it is said that the Lord looked at him. It is important to notice that the Lord looked at him, and then gave him a special name. For the Lord looks at all who are willing to follow Him, and knows just what their quality is. To Simon He gave the name of Peter, meaning the rock, or faith.

Next, the Lord found a disciple whose name means a lover of horses. This was Philip. Since a horse means an understanding of the Word, think of Philip as one who loves to learn. And he loved to tell others, for he went out and found another man to be a disciple. His name was Nathanael (sometimes called Bartholomew). It is said that Jesus saw this man Nathanael coming to Him, and said that he was a man in whom there was no guile. (John 1:47.) That means someone who is sincere and does not pretend to be what he is not. How surprised the man was to hear the Lord speak in this way. He said, “How do you know me?” (As we grow up, we come to realize how well the Lord knows us. And if we think about that disciple saying, “How do you know me?” we will really see ourselves.) Jesus told him that He had seen him even before Philip called Him. This gave those first few disciples an idea of the Lord’s knowledge of all people. And He said after this, “You shall see greater things than this.” And those five did see something soon, for they all attended a wedding where the Lord did the beginning of His miracles. He turned water to wine. By this miracle Jesus “manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him” (John

1:11). Manifesting glory means showing something of His wonderful power. Like someone seeing a flash of the sun's light within a cloud, the disciples then saw a flash of the Lord's inner glory, and they believed.

Something else they saw soon after that, they would not forget. They went with Him to Jerusalem, where He boldly went into the temple, and with a whip, drove out the moneychangers and overturned their tables. He did this with such force that it reminded the disciples of a Psalm about burning zeal for the house of God. (John 2:17.) To those who protested, Jesus then said, **"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."** But He was speaking of the temple of His body. And three years later, when He had risen from the dead, **"His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said"** (John 2:22).

Some time after that, when the disciples urged the Lord to have something to eat, He said, **"I have food to eat of which you do not know"** (John 4:32). At first they said to each other, **"Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"** But then He said, **"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."**

When they came back into the land of Galilee, some of the disciples returned to their fishing, continuing this until the day that Jesus walked on the sea shore, first calling the brothers, Simon and Andrew. **"Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed Him"** (Mark 1:18). When He had gone a little further, He saw John with his brother James in a boat, mending fish nets, and He called them to follow, too.

As those disciples followed, they saw the Lord do wonderful things. He commanded evil spirits to go away. He took the hand of Peter's wife's mother and made her well of her fever by the touch of His hand. They heard Him speak with power and saw crowds of people thronging to see Him.

Then another disciple was called, one who was not a fisherman. This was Matthew (or Levi). He had been sitting collecting taxes, and Jesus, as He passed by, simply said, **"Follow Me."** And he followed.

Up to now, you see, they had only been followers. But now Jesus chose twelve whom He would send forth. Thus they became not just followers, but doers and teachers. Those are the twelve that followed Him in the world. Those are the apostles that went and told the good news that He had brought into the world. Those are the apostles who established the Christian Church. Those are the twelve (several of whom died for their faith) who went to heaven, and centuries later were called together again by the Lord and sent to preach in the other world that the Lord Jesus Christ reigns.